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1752 No 5

A Serious

# ADDRESS

TO THE

*R. B. Hunter*

# PUBLIC,

CONCERNING THE

# ABUSES

IN THE

# PRACTICE OF PHYSIC.

---

Ἡ ἱρική, τεχνῶν μὲν πασῶν ἐστὶν ἐπιφανέσθην· δια δὲ αμαθίην τῶν  
τε χρεωμένων αὐτῇ, καὶ τῶν εἰκὴ τῆς τοιᾶσδε κρινούσῃ, πολὺ τι  
πασῶν ἤδη τεχνῶν ἀπολειπείαι. Hippocr. de Lege.

Καὶ οἱ ἱήτροι φημὶ μὲν πολλοὶ, ἐργῶ δὲ παῖχυν βαιοί. Ibid.

*Some fall by Laudanum, and some by Steel,*

*And Death in Ambush lies in ev'ry Pill.*

*For save or slay this Privilege They claim,*

*Though Credit suffers, the Reward's the same.*

DISPENSARY.

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L O N D O N:

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A S E R I O U S  
A D D R E S S , & c .



T is commonly said, that we never fix a true Value on any Thing, until it be taken from us ; when the Inconveniences, we suffer from its Absence, create an Esteem for what was treated before with Indifference. I have no Business to examine whether this Observation be strictly just, or will hold good in general ; it being enough for my Purpose to find it applicable to all Sorts of People , who feel the Anguish of Pain or Sickness. However regardless and even lavish they have been of  
B                      Health,

Health, when Diseases come upon them; they extol it above every Enjoyment; and without it deem Riches, Honours, and Life itself not worth possessing. Since this is the Case with Mankind, none surely will refuse a suitable Encouragement to those, who are able to preserve Health, or recover it when lost: But on the other Hand, is it not evident how much Society is interested to discourage such Men, as attempt what they are ignorant of, and thereby lengthen out Diseases, and endanger or destroy the Lives of those committed to their Care? Health being so eagerly desired, we might have expected some Uniformity in the Pursuit of it; but it is here almost as in the Pursuit of Happiness, where every one takes a different Course; seldom perhaps reflecting whether it be a right one. Wherefore Quacks are applied to for Relief, and every vain-boasting Pretender to Skill is believed on his own Word, and can levy, with little Trouble, great Sums of Money: In short, Physic is practised by every Body



Body who pleases, without any previous Study or Knowledge. The Credulity of People is indeed amazing, who put so great Faith in the Virtues of empirical Nostrums, and the Skill of Men, who never studied the Art of Physic : But this is, no doubt, heightened by their Impatience under Diseases, and a Notion of saving Expences.

Physicians are very little employed in the Practice of Physic, and towards the End of the Disease only, when it will often admit of no Cure ; yet so far are they from attempting to vindicate the Exercise of their own Profession, that they seem resolved to part with it all together, being most industrious in depreciating themselves, and lessening the Esteem, which the Public used to pay them. Their various contradictory Opinions and their Debates, managed with so much Heat, ill Nature, and worse Manners, have had, and ever will have, a direct Tendency to make them contemptible. And

at present, what Pains are taken to foment Jealousies and Suspicions ; to raise Scurrilities, and propagate dirty Libels ? If private Grudges be amongst them, they stick at nothing to blacken one another's Reputation. These are become the noble Fruits of a liberal Education ! *Is this the boasted Learning, or are these Virtues consistent with the Character which you profess ?* Most shameful indeed for these Gentlemen to give so much Occasion of public Censure, whereby their Art is vilified and disgraced. It were however unjust to charge them with all the Infamy or Reproach which is cast upon their Profession, as it is well known what bad Judges the Bulk of People are of the Excellency and Usefulness of Arts and Sciences, who commonly receive right or wrong Impressions of them, from what they are told by such as they esteem. Thus the Admirers of a modern Hero, in astronomical Divinity or theological Astronomy, or whatever else you please to call his System, dare even to decry the Knowledge of Geometry.



metry and *Newtonian* Astronomy. His profound Ignorance they mistake for Erudition, and his Impudence for sheer Wit and sound Raillery. But though the World be often easily deceived in these Matters, have not the Faculty themselves given a good Handle, by their Differences, Contentions, and Animosities, to have the very Certainty and Usefulness of the Art of Physic called in Question? I most heartily compassionate the Art, whose Honours are thus miserably torn by her ungrateful Sons! Poor Dame! it is enough for her to bear up under her own Infirmities, and therefore too much, surely, to have the Follies of her Professors laid upon her Shoulders. If these Gentlemen would consult their private Interest, it would advise them to lay aside Wrath; and they need be under no Apprehension of their Arms growing rusty by a Cessation of Hostilities; for there is a large Field before them, where each may shew his Prowess and not do any Mischief; where Emulation will be glorious, and do Service to Mankind.

I will

I will now proceed to examine some Abuses, which have been committed in the Exercise of this Art, and endeavour to shew by what Means they may be prevented, the Knowledge of Physic improved and made more beneficial to Society.——But before I go any farther, I must desire my Reader to moderate his Expectation of what follows, and look over with a candid Eye my Inaccuracies of Method and Expression. I am thoroughly conscious of my Inability to execute what I have undertaken, in a Manner suitable to the Importance of the Subject; and have only to say for myself, that I have thought an inferior Performance of this Kind, writ with an honest Zeal for the Interest of Society and the Honour of a Profession which I esteem, would be better than no Performance at all.

I was first led to this Subject by a News-paper, which told us a melancholy Story of a Gentleman having lost his Life by a Mistake in administering Physic. It is not long since this happened,



pened, which, according to my Memory, was in few Words as follows :  
 “ An Apothecary ordered his Servant to  
 “ prepare a Medicine, and carry it to  
 “ a Patient. The Servant committed a  
 “ Mistake, whereby the Patient was  
 “ hurried into another World.” Miserable Case ! What Care and Circumspection are required only to do no Mischief ! My Reflexions on this fatal Accident presented to me a very horrid Scene of Distress, which is little regarded, though a great Number of our Fellow Creatures feel it every Day. All Chances of surmounting Diseases, by the native Strength of their Constitutions, are taken from them. Their Hands tied down by Violence, they are under an indispensable Necessity of suffering the Joint Attacks of Diseases, and injudicious (shall I call them by their true Name, most pernicious ?) Methods of Treatment. Roused at these gross Impositions (which are often courted into the Bargain) I resolved to do my Duty at all Hazards, by faithfully endeavouring to expose them in their proper Colours.

So



So much by Way of Preface, and now entering upon my Task, I beg leave to remind my Reader what he knows of the present State of Physic in this Country. He sees every Day that the Practice of this Art is chiefly in the Hands of Apothecaries ; insomuch, that without Impropriety it may be said, they have made a Monopoly of it. They visit Patients, and prescribe for them, as well as administer the Drugs. Unhappily however, we have very few Apothecaries who give themselves any Trouble in making up Medicines, or even seeing them made up by their Servants. Most of them will be found to trust entirely to their Journeymen or Apprentices. And are Things of so great Moment, of the last Importance to Society, to be thus shamefully neglected by Apothecaries, and put into such Hands ? The Account we have related from the News-Papers, answers this Question very plainly. What do these Gentlemen say is their Business ? Is it not to prepare and compound Drugs ? But this, it seems, is deemed a low and Mechanic Office ;  
and

and therefore adjudged to People of a servile Station. Their Views are of a higher, and more refined Sort, to distinguish themselves by the dictatorial Power they can exercise over Nature, which gives them at the same Time a good Pretext for putting more Money in their Pockets, by charging their Drugs higher on Account of Attendance.

I shall not insist much on this Affair, as it will be an easy Matter for my Reader himself to make suitable Reflexions on it; most People having been in Apothecaries Shops, I shall appeal to them. Let them declare the Freedoms they have seen practised there. Most unwarrantable Freedoms indeed! where Weight and Measure are laid aside, and the Quantities of Medicines only guessed by ignorant Boys.. Happily for Mankind! Most of those Things which are commonly used in Practice, admit of a great Latitude in their Doses. Happily too for the Apothecaries and their Servants, or their lazy Conduct had been too visibly pernicious to pass unpunished

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by



by the Civil Magistrate ! But though the Mischief is not so very evident, or is seldom noticed, it is not therefore less certain. For in this Way no Man, who has the Management of a Disease, can know what he is about. If the Proportions and Quantities of what he orders are varied without his Knowledge, it will be surely impossible for him to distinguish aright between the Effects of his Medicines and the Effects of the Disease ; he will be frustrated in his Expectations (however justly founded) and must fight his Weapons through, as the Saying is, altogether in the Dark. But how inexcusable is this Liberty, where Opium and Drugs of the greatest Efficacy are treated in the same Manner ? I have shuddered to see a Piece of Opium, torn from a large Mass, and without any Ceremony of Scales, crammed into the Heart of a Bolus. What a dreadful Set of Symptoms such an Overdose occasions ! In what a wretched Plight may we suppose the Physician, who had prescribed only half a Grain of it ! His Judgment would undoubtedly  
be

be called in Question, and he perhaps dismissed with Infamy.

Who is ignorant of the common Method of substituting one Thing in the Room of another? Because the Writers of Pharmacy, forsooth, have taken into their Heads to range Simples into Classes, They have got a *Quid pro Quo* at their Fingers Ends; and therefore no sooner is any Thing wanting in the Shops, or not easily to be found, than its Room is filled up, by what they judge will answer the same Intention.

These are a few of the Inconveniencies (a very modest Name and Catalogue) to which the Art of Physic is exposed, through the Ignorance and Idleness of those who prepare Drugs to answer the various Indications of Cure. But are not these enough to frustrate the most consummate Skill, to load a most useful Profession with Infamy, and render it really pernicious to Mankind? Some of these Mischiefs, however, may be easily avoided. People need only send a Per-

son to wait in the Apothecary's Shop, who shall not suffer the Drugs to be made up, unless the Master is present; and at least superintend his Servant. Until this be done, they have themselves chiefly to blame for many fatal Accidents, which are unjustly brought in to disgrace Physic, and make the Art appear precarious and conjectural.

In like Manner was the great *Newton's* Doctrine of Colours at first treated with Contempt, by many Foreigners. They bungled in the Construction of their Prisms, neglected several Circumstances, which they thought trifling; and therefore held in the Rank of Fable, The most beautiful Discovery in Philosophy.

But if Society is so much injured in the administering Part of Physic only, will it be an easy Matter to describe the Havock done by those, who ignorant of Diseases, of the Properties of Drugs, and the Intentions to be served by them, stalk into a sick Man's Chamber, and,  
with



with a most solemn Confidence, relate their huge Conflicts with the Tyrant Death, and boast Victories, as numerous as their Gallypots, over the yawning Grave? We will have, by and by, an Occasion of examining the Pretensions of our Apothecaries to medical Knowledge; and perhaps it will come in more opportunely, after we have seen by what Means these Gentlemen were employed in the Management of Diseases. I don't know how to do this better, than by relating Part of a Conversation which happened some Time ago, between an inquisitive Foreigner and a very honest and ingenious Apothecary. The Foreigner, being greatly surprized to find the Business of Physicians done by other People, applied to his Friend to account for it, who was pleased to gratify his Curiosity in the following Manner.

“ We were formerly then, Sir, al-  
 “ together employed in the *Preparation*  
 “ and *Composition* of *Medicaments*, ac-  
 “ cording to the Rules laid down in the  
 “ *Formulae*,

“ *Formulæ* of *Physicians*. Did not you  
 “ tell me, that it is still the *Occupation*  
 “ of the *Fraternity* in your Country?  
 “ Well: I am very sorry for it; but  
 “ let them have Courage. I have a  
 “ *rich Cardiac* in Store for them. Com-  
 “ municate my *Intelligence*, and it will  
 “ teach them a *Process* to *sublimate*  
 “ themselves from their *abject Depend-*  
 “ *ance*, and *purge* their *presuming Ma-*  
 “ *sters* from the *Chambers* of *Patients*,  
 “ as we have done in this Country.  
 “ And now to return to my Story, I  
 “ can’t help owning but our Trade at  
 “ that Time was profitable enough.  
 “ We lived very well, and some *accu-*  
 “ *mulated* a great *Quantity* of Money.  
 “ *Sed Pecunia est radix malorum*. For  
 “ it being too well known, that our  
 “ Trade furnished good *Living* and the  
 “ like; it struck the *Pericraniums* of  
 “ *avaricious* People to *educate* their Sons  
 “ in our *Profession*, whereby it was over-  
 “ stock’d. I dare say, Sir, that you  
 “ have seen People in a *Phtbisis*, where-  
 “ in they labour under a constant *Atro-*  
 “ *phy*; that is to say, Sir, their Food  
 “ does



“ does them no Good, which arises  
 “ from the *colliquative Excretions* of  
 “ the *alimental Juices*, by the *numberless*  
 “ *cutaneous* and *abdominal Outlets* of the  
 “ Body. And thus was our Case exactly  
 “ *circumstantiated* ; for the Business be-  
 “ ing *portioned* among so many, there  
 “ fell but a small *Quantity* of it to each  
 “ Man's Share, not enough to give *Nu-*  
 “ *trition* to us and our Families ; and  
 “ so we became *prodigiously emaciated*.  
 “ However, Sir, *Necessitas est Pater &*  
 “ *Mater Inventionis*. An ingenious Bro-  
 “ ther, who felt our Distresses with a  
 “ *most exquisite Sympathy*, generously de-  
 “ voted himself to *explore* all *possible*  
 “ Ways of recovering us ; and at last,  
 “ after many *fruitless Investigations* found  
 “ out the so much wished for *Medi-*  
 “ *cine*, the *grand Catholicon*, *Analeptic*,  
 “ and *Cordial* of Apothecaries. But,  
 “ before I acquaint you with the *Divine*  
 “ *Arcanum*, I must first tell you how  
 “ he came to find it. He took Advan-  
 “ tage of the Sloth of Physicians, who  
 “ used to send us to their Patients,  
 “ when they had no *Affection* to go them-  
 “ selves ;

“ selves ; and from the *Observations* we  
 “ made on the *Distemperatures*, would pre-  
 “ scribe for them. And so having *rumina-*  
 “ *ted* on this Affair with much *Affidui-*  
 “ *ty*, and finding great *Murmurations*  
 “ among the People, for the little Trou-  
 “ ble which Physicians took ; he told  
 “ his Customers, the important Concern  
 “ it gave him, to see the Doctors make  
 “ so free with their Pockets. That for  
 “ his own Part he had a *Quantum sufficit*  
 “ of Doctors *Prescriptions*, and would  
 “ go according to them. That as he  
 “ *compounded* the *Medicaments*, he must  
 “ certainly know them much better ;  
 “ and therefore, if they allowed him to  
 “ charge a little more for his *Attendance*,  
 “ they might save the Expence of a  
 “ Doctor all together, or towards the  
 “ End of the Disease, that it would  
 “ be Time enough to call him in,  
 “ whereby they would keep in their  
 “ Pockets many a good fat Fee. To make  
 “ short, Sir, this good Man succeeded,  
 “ and the good Example was soon fol-  
 “ lowed, which has *effectually* freed us  
 “ from the *Controul* of Physicians. Con-  
 “ trou



“ *troul* did ‘I say? Vain Word! The  
 “ Doctors must be recommended by us,  
 “ or eat Water-Gruel in the Room of  
 “ their Patients.”

Leaving our Friends together, I now proceed to enquire into the Education and Abilities of these Gentlemen, who assume the Guardianship of Public Health. But as they make up a large Body, and are well established in the Opinion of the World, it will be very necessary, I think, to premise somewhat in my Behalf, for the Freedom I take with them. This Freedom indeed is no more, than what the best and most able Men in this Profession have always taken, who thought it their Duty to censure Ignorance boldly, wherever they found it; to warn Mankind against the Dangers, they were exposed to, from the Practice of ignorant Men. The Divine *Hippocrates* (who was always ready to vindicate this Art from Reproach, whose Candour and Judgment will never be called in Question) expressly tells us, that the noblest of all Arts, To wit Physic, had

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been



been degraded, and was become the lowest and most contemptible, by the Ignorance of those who exercised it. No Man, perhaps, ever had an equal Title to this Freedom of Censure ; for he was most indefatigably industrious in observing the Course of Nature, in producing, increasing, continuing, and terminating Diseases. He borrowed from every Science, and even improved what Chance threw in his Way, to extend his Knowledge of Diseases, and the Methods of curing them. Let those who pretend to practise this Art, peruse his Works, and they will see (if they have Eyes at all) the great Difficulties which attend it. But I forget myself—*Hippocrates* must give Way to his Betters, and it is Time to return to our Apothecaries.

According to our Proposal, the Education of these Gentlemen comes next to be considered, which shall not detain us very long ; as almost every one knows it well enough already. The short Account I will give, may suffice, I think, for demonstrating their absolute  
Unfitness

Unfitness for what they undertake. Take it as follows : “ A young Lad, with very little *Latin*, is bound Apprentice to an Apothecary : He is taught the Characters and Abbreviations which Physicians use, and becomes able, in Process of Time, to read and make up a Doctor’s Bill. If he is a Lad of Application, he will peruse *Quincy’s Dispensatory*, whereby he is made acquainted with the common Properties of Drugs, or the Virtues commonly ascribed to them. He hears the Names, by which the Distempers of the Patients are called ; and if his Memory is good, will perhaps treasure up what were ordered for them. Thus having spent seven or eight Years of Drudgery (some of them have not even this Education, however trifling) he looks out for himself, takes a Shop, and would be very much affronted, if you entertained any Fear of your own Life, by trusting it in his Hands.”

Now that we have got his Freedom for him, and furnished his Shop, is the



Matter mended ? His grand Employment, to be sure, is to get Customers, and dispense as many Drugs as he can persuade People to take from him. To improve the few Opportunities he may have, is of inferior Consideration ; and pray why should he concern himself about the Matter ? Let a Doctor be called before the Patient dies, and all is well. He can ward off, at any Time, the Imputation of bad Practice by this Means. It is Skill enough to nick that Time. They give it out that such a Doctor attended him, though he only made one Visit ; that there was no Want of the best Advice or Assistance, and such like. Thus the Doctor has the genteel Compliment paid him of the Patient's Death, to swell his annual Bill of Mortality.

As Craft and Ignorance are soon discovered, unless they wear the Cloak of Honesty and Knowledge ; so great Pains have been taken to sound in People's Ears the wonderful Effects of Age and Experience. They knew the Bait was  
tempting,

tempting, and would be greedily devoured; therefore they withheld it not. I don't blame them. A Man certainly may be allowed to supply in Words what he fails in Deeds; wherefore it is urged in Favour of Apothecaries, that they see many Patients. I allow it frankly; and so do Nurses and many good old Women. But let this boasted Claim of Experience be carried as far as they think proper, I beg leave to ask them when it begins; whether with the Change of Colour of their Beards, or their public Entry into a Chariot; or, in short, whatever Time they please to fix upon themselves: And then let them tell me, what became of those deluded Mortals, who put their Trust in them before that important *Æra*? According to the Sophistry of these People, as every Man who has seen many Diseases, does necessarily understand their Nature, and the proper Methods to remove them; so every one who lives to be Gray-headed and old, is a wise, prudent, and good Man.

A re-

A regular Education and Study have been represented as Things of no Value, serving only to supply Ostentation and Pomp. Experience once more is every Thing. I'm afraid, however, that these Gentlemen who have this Word *Experience* so often in their Mouths, can make but a very indifferent Title to any Honour from it. For pray, what are we to understand by it? Surely no less than the Result of many Experiments or Observations, accurately made and compared together. But this is no easy Matter. I hope that every Body will agree with me, that it requires an attentive Person, with a sound Judgment, to make Experiments justly. He must be a Man, whose sole View is to discover Truth; who has divested himself of all Prejudices, and gives nothing Credit, which he does not see distinctly: And above all, who will spare no Pains to make different Trials of the same Things, before he gives any Determination. I cannot think the most sanguine Friend of the Apothecaries will be bold enough to say, that their Experience is  
of



of this Kind. Shall I incur Censure, by adding, that they are unfurnished with those Requisites, which should be always premised in medical experimental Inquiries; I mean a faithful History of Diseases, the Knowledge of the human Structure and Physiology. But, if they are so egregiously deficient in what relates to their own Experience, what Opinion ought we to entertain of their Abilities in Physic, who give themselves no Trouble of enquiring after the Observations and Judgment (or which is the same Thing, the Experience) of others, in other Ages and Countries? We have seen the Difficulties, attending a regular Course of Experiments; and permit me to say, that there is great Danger for a Man to depend all together on his own Stock. For allowing even that his Observations be duly made, it is impossible for him to be thence furnished with Indications of Cure, for all those Diseases, with the various Circumstances attending them, which may fall under his Inspection.

The

The same mighty Champions, for the Word Experience (for they can be allowed no more) have set up their Voices to roar aloud against all Reasoning in Physic, as bewildering, fallacious, and of the most dangerous Consequence to Mankind. Most reasonable in them indeed to divest themselves of Reason, and then boast of what they have done to all the World ! But this important Tenet, the Offspring of Ignorance and Conceit (like many others of the same Family) confutes itself. For without Reasoning or Analogy, whether a Man will own it or not, or indeed whether he knows it or not, it is merely impossible for him, even to make any Use of what he has already seen of Diseases. For does he not compare together the Nature, Violence, and Time of the Disease ; the Seat of it, the Age and Constitution of the Patient, with what he remembers to have seen, of the same Kind before, and thence draw his Indications of Cure ? And is not this reasoning in Physic ? Does he not employ it too, in the Choice and Refusal of Medicines ; in proportioning



tioning the Quantities, and ordering when they are to be given? Add still further, that there are no two Diseases exactly alike in all their Circumstances: Here then his Darling Experience is good for nothing, unless aided and directed by a just and accurate Ratiocination.

I believe this will not be thought an improper Place to destroy a little Cobweb Sophistry, which has intangled many well meaning People, and brought them into much Danger. They think, because the Apothecary has seen the Doctor's Prescriptions in certain Diseases, he may surely make them up again, when the like Return, every Bit as well of himself, as if the Doctor had been paid to command him. Agreed. The Fact is very true, but I must beg their Leave to deny the Inference they draw from it. For, as it has been just now observed, no two Diseases are exactly alike in their Circumstances; therefore it is not to be expected, that the same Medicines can do the same good as before. A Disease may take upon  
E it



it much the same Appearance with another, which the Patient formerly laboured under, and yet require a very opposite Treatment. For Example: A Person having been afflicted with a violent Pain in his Side, was blooded plentifully, and relieved. Some Years after he is again seized with a Pain in his Side; but instead of finding Relief from the Lancet, as he did before, his Pain increases. What then is to be done? A large Clyster, with a purging Draught, will set all to Rights immediately.

It is not surely enough to have the Name of a Disease, to enable a Man to cure it; tho' this *Nomenclator Practice* passes currant every Day. And indeed our Apothecaries have most elegantly comprized the whole Art of Physic, in the Solution of this Problem, “ *The Name of the Disease given (which was a very easy Thing to them) to find the Remedy,*” in doing which, they act with great Expedition. They consult for a few Minutes *Shaw's Practice of Physic*, or any other *Index for Receipts*, and the Business

Business is done. Thus File-precedents challenge the Respect of Law-precedents ; but which are most grievous, let the World determine. To what has been said, I need only add, that where Medicines may be suitable to the Disease, unless the Time of the Disease, when they are to be administered, and the just Proportions of them be observed, they can do no good : And to do no good by Medicines is assuredly to do Mischief. People would be less subject to err in their Opinions of these Things, if they considered Drugs like other Instruments ; which, according to the Skill and Probity of those who use them, become useful or pernicious.

I may be thought a very rigid and unfair Censor, if having spent so much Time with the Apothecaries, I take no Notice of the Surgeons, who have ingrossed some Parts of Physic entirely ; and many of them practise it in common. That this large Body therefore may have no just Reason to accuse me of any Want of Respect for them, I

declare with great Submission, that the Objections we have made to the Apothecaries for practising Physic, are still stronger when applied to them, by so much the more, that they are altogether ignorant of Drugs and their Uses.

Whoever views attentively this Draught of the State of Physic, and has any tender Feelings or Regard for his Country, will, I think, be much alarmed at the Mischiefs occasioned hourly, by that Art, which professes to redress them. *By that Art* have I wrote? I most humbly ask Pardon. My Pen mistook its Office. These are not Miscarriages of the Art, but of those Men, who pretend to be her Artificers. Possibly his Patriotism may carry him so far, as to wish the Exercise of Medicine proscribed; in the same Manner, as it were better to have the wearing of Swords prohibited, if only Madmen used them. This Zeal may be condemned as extravagant, and I promise you I don't adopt it. However I honestly declare, to be my Opinion, that Physic, on its present Footing,



ing, will be found to do very little Good, when all its Accounts are fairly ballanced.

I imagine there has been enough said to convince any Man of the Necessity for reforming Physic. We are told, that the Ignorance, Immoralities, and gross Impositions of the *Romish* Clergy, made a Reformation in Religion necessary. May I be allowed then to put the Question, whether we want Incitements to a Reformation in Physic? It has surely been postponed too long already. We don't live in an Age now, wherein a Contempt of bodily Welfare is likely to gain Applause, and be dignified with the Honours of Piety and Heroism. Such pious Sloth may have answered very well the Purposes of designing Priests, but I know not any Reason for Physicians to adopt, or the World to bear with it.

I am now come to the most difficult Part of my Task, which requires me to point out, by what Means, the Mischiefs

chiefs arising from the Practice of Physic may be avoided ; the Art itself improved, and its Reputation and Usefulness promoted. If I have given Offence to any People, by what I have wrote in the foregoing Pages, I am afraid the Number of Malecontents will increase by the Sequel. This Fear, however, shall not hinder me from telling my Mind freely ; whatever Sneers and Obloquy I expose myself to by doing it. And to begin boldly, I think in the first Place, the Lie should be given to the old Proverb, which declares *no Physician to be worthy of Bread, while he has Teeth to eat it.* The Custom may seem venerable, I have no Objection to that ; but I don't think it prudent never to trust your Life in a Man's Hand before he grows afraid of losing his own. While a Man is able to go through the Fatigue of Business, with proper Spirit, he is thrown aside as useless. What could give Birth to this Custom ? Was it the Diffidence of Mankind in the Abilities of young Physicians ? A short Sketch of their Education will soon shew



shew us, whether there is any just Reason for this Diffidence. “ A Man then, who intends to be a Physician, having finished his Course of polite and useful Literature, applies himself to acquire a Knowledge of the human Structure, of Chemistry and Drugs. His next Care is to be furnished with just Notions of the Animal Oeconomy, the Theory of Diseases, and the most approved Methods of removing them. Having spent some Years this Way, and in acquainting himself with the Practice of ancient and modern Physicians (not negligent at the same Time of improving the Opportunities he meets with of seeing Practice) he devotes some Years to the Attendance of Hospitals, whereby he is made more thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of Diseases. At his Leisure he then compares the Description of Diseases, given by Authors and his Teachers, with what he finds in Nature; if they have been any Way faulty, he corrects them, or should his Judgment have proved too hasty, he innocently corrects himself. He takes the same

Course



Course in the Management of Diseases, by comparing the Practice of other People, with what is before his Eyes ; with this Advantage, that the Neglect or Errors of those who do the Business of Hospitals, instruct him often more than their most rational and successful Practice ; at least, he is thereby taught what is to be avoided.

Having given this Sketch of our Physician's Education, methinks the World has no great Reason to doubt of his Abilities ; especially after the Testimony he is obliged to give of them at the University. I must acknowledge indeed, that some have found a more expeditious Way in qualifying themselves for this Office, and been dubb'd Doctors by Universities (*properly so called, as they refuse nobody*) which they never saw. The Post or Carrier brings them Degrees at a very moderate Price ; and such People most certainly have contributed to disgrace Physic, and lessen the Esteem of those who have an undoubted Right to Practice. I pay however

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no Regard to such Men ; and though they are Doctors, I think Physicians should give them no Sanctuary. But to return from this Digression, the World reject Physicians, because they are young ; yet never consider that they will employ the same Men, when they grow old and know no more than they did before. Unless this Practice changes, I fear Physicians will degenerate very soon. For we can never suppose that a Man, who foresees the best Part of his Life to be unemployed, will become solicitous to extend his Knowledge. And why should he, as it would avail him nothing, being unable to make a proper Use of it ? He will be led naturally to pursue Pleasures of another Kind, and embrace every agreeable Amusement for the Support of his Patience : His grand Scheme will be to cultivate a large Acquaintance, that when the Hour comes, *fraughted with wrinkled Brows and hollow Eyes*, the World may know him to be a Doctor well disposed to replenish his Coffers, and be even with them for their contemptuous Neg-



lect of him. I have heard some People say, that these Men had forgot many useful Parts of Knowledge, to which they were no Strangers formerly. But I don't know this personally; and as there is much Envy among Mankind (the worst Medium through which Things can be viewed) I would fain believe the Notion to be groundless.

This Respect for young Physicians is most certainly well calculated to restore the Dignity of Physic, and promote its Usefulness, which, by the by, is the only stable Support of Dignity. The Art itself is far from being perfect, though the Slothfulness of many Physicians gives too much Room to believe them of a contrary Opinion. If they know what has been done by others, they rest satisfied, and have not the least Inclination or Desire to make any Acquisition of themselves. Like Children they have their leading Strings, with this Difference, that they can never go without them. Need I mention any Instances of the Imperfection of the Art?



Art? I shall content myself with one or two, which will shew, at the same Time, the Justness of the Censure, now passed on the Indolence of the Faculty. How little Pains then have been taken to investigate, with due Accuracy, the Properties and Virtues of Drugs; a Thing so necessary to the well practising of Physic? Their Doses are too capricious, and might be better ascertained; but neither of these can be ever done, while Farragoes of Medicines continue in Esteem, and before we render our Prescriptions more simple than is the Mode at present. It requires great Sagacity, Judgment, and Attention to be able to say what are the Powers of any one simple Medicine; and surely it will be found more difficult to discover the Virtues of Drugs, when great Heaps of them are jumbled together.

Chemistry, and other Parts of Natural Philosophy furnish many Observations to teach us, that by the Mixture of Bodies, very different Effects are produced

duced than we could have expected, from the known Properties of these Bodies taken separately. And none can say the Case is otherwise in Physic: Nevertheless, I am far from professing myself an Enemy to all Compound-Medicines, though I think they are used too frequently. I allow freely, that we can determine the Effects of *Theriaca Andromachi*, for Instance, as exactly and in the same Manner too, as those of a Simple. But then to reason, as many People do, from the Properties which they have discovered of this Compound, to the Properties of every individual Simple, of which it is composed, without separate Trials of them all, is assuredly a very great Solecism in the experimental Part of Physic. A Man may judge, if he pleases, because they all conspire in producing certain Effects, that the Powers of each and of the whole, are of the same Kind, and only differ in Degree. But without engaging in a formal Discussion of this Affair, it is plain from what has been just now said of the Mixture of Bodies, that this

Kind



Kind of reasoning is unphilosophical and false. However absurd this Way of reasoning is, I am afraid that it is too generally used ; and am of Opinion too, that we owe to it the Fashion of varying Medicines so often. For unless this was the Case, a Physician surely would stay a little to see the Effects of his Medicines, before he changed them for another Set ; but as he imagines himself possessed of an inexhaustible Stock of Drugs of the same Virtues, why may not he, in Imitation of the gay World diversifying their Dress, ring all the Changes of Taste, Colour and Form, to hinder his Patient from growing weary of him ? How pernicious this the most excusable Mode of varying is in the Practice of Physic, I leave to be determined by those who will think of it seriously. This fickle, indetermined Way of prescribing has given rise to another Kind of *varying*, which some use, and one would imagine, with a Design, to ruin the very Art. Despising all Method and Order, or, more properly speaking, entirely ignorant of curative Indications, they  
blister



blister and bleed, sweat and purge, vomit and give cooling Medicines promiscuously, and at meer Hazard. They begin with the first, for Example; and if the Patient is not relieved, one of the others must be essayed, and so on; and conclude it a most obstinate Disease, if it gives not Way to their *Herculean Treatment*. A most obstinately good *Constitution* indeed, if it be not destroyed by them! One would imagine these Gentlemen had been educated in a *Molierian Academy*. But after all, let Physicians be more simple in their Prescriptions, and steady in the Use of them; and then they can judge what are their Effects, and what is to be charged to the Account of the Disease. This is the Way to know what they are about, and will point to them how they are to vary with Judgment.

But not to go too far from what was proposed a little while ago, we return to pay our Respects to the young Physician. We may justly then observe, that his Anxiety, to gain Reputation, would

would make him accurate in observing, and oblige him to give due Attendance on Diseases. There is an *Enthusiasm* too (take not the Word in a bad Sense) attending our first Studies, which carried into Practice, would render him indefatigable to confirm or refute the Maxims of his Predecessors. Add to this, that it is no necessary Consequence, because Physicians have grown old in the Exercise of their Profession, they are become more skilled or judicious : Many by Force of Practice having been so habituated to see and prescribe for sick People, that they have no longer any Concern or Trouble about them. This Ease nevertheless arises, not from a perfect Knowledge of their Business, but from the early Common-Place they have made for all Diseases ; from which they have never deviated, and to which they are so accustomed, that they have it always before their Eyes, and are quite incapable of attending to any Thing else. A Practice merely mechanical, and most destructive.

We might have expected from the numerous Hospitals, a great Improvement



ment of the Art of Physic. The Apothecaries, by their Avarice, made it necessary to erect them, as the Poor were unable to pay the high Prices of their Drugs. In this Respect they acted with as little Policy as Humanity. For had they distinguished properly between Poor and Rich, and rated their Medicines according to the Circumstances of their Patients, the Hospital Spirit (which is now truly *Knight-Errant*) would never have been exerted to their Prejudice; and the Hospital - Business shared among them, had been no contemptible an Affair.—But to our Business; If the Physicians of these Places had attended carefully to the Cases before them, and published a faithful and judicious Account of their Observations, they had improved themselves in the Knowledge of their Profession, discharged honourably their important Trust, and discovered many Things relating to Diseases, and the Properties of Drugs, of universal Benefit to Mankind; they had then merited the great Respect which has been long paid to them, as  
Men



Men of large Experience. Unfortunately however for the Art of Physic, and for Society, this Respect, which methinks, should have been an Incitement to deserve it, has made them idle. Their Character being so venerable, they thought themselves under no Necessity to become Drudges to Physic or the Public; and imagined they had no more to do, than what their Governors expected from them; that is, to write for their Patients, and I am afraid have given a Sanction to that Routine Practice we lately condemned with so much Justice. I fear too, that the Hospitals have prejudiced Physic another Way, as they may have contributed to make young Men remiss in their Studies. For seeing what mighty Things an Hospital could do for them, it may be, I think, presumed that some at least may have had chiefly in View to make Connexions among such People as could serve them upon Vacancies. But I touch this Point slightly, being ignorant whether there is any Truth in what I have now surmised; and very possibly my Over-

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zeal for the Interest of this Art exposes me to a groundless Fear and Suspicion. I mean no Offence, but tell what I think with an honest Freedom. However, as it is of great Consequence to prevent Mischiefs from this Quarter, I beg Leave to recommend to all Governors of Hospitals, to dispense with their Authority in choosing their Physicians. They are unfit Judges of the Merit of their Candidates, and surely Party Spirit or private Friendship should give Way to the weightier Concerns of Charity. On these Accounts, I would propose to have all Vacancies supplied by such People, as a Majority of the *College* agreed on: Or if they dislike this, let them have a Majority of all the practising Physicians in *London*. We can never suppose, where the Number of Physicians is so great, a Combination to push an ignorant or unworthy Man, at the Risque of their Characters, and the Honour of their Profession. Since I have taken this Freedom to address myself to the Governors of Hospitals, I must ask their Pardon for troubling them

with



with another Proposal, which is to oblige the Doctors to attend oftner on the Patients. A poor Man's Disease requires the same looking after with a rich Man's ; his Life is often of more Consequence to his Family than the others, and frequently perhaps of more Consequence to Society. What then makes the different Attendance ? Undoubtedly you'll reply, *Self-interest*. This may be a good Reason for what Physicians do. But are not the Governors under an Obligation to reform bad Customs, which defeat the very End of these charitable Undertakings ? If the present Doctors refuse so constant an Attendance, increase the Number, and get others chosen on that Condition.

I had almost forgot to take any Notice of the shameful Negligence and Supineness of Hospital-Physicians in a particular Case, which concerns the Improvement of Physic. They are regardless of the Opportunities, to inspect the diseased Appearances of dead Bodies ; though this be perhaps the chief Way



to improve Physic. We have indeed a great many Observations of this Sort, which have been very useful, and I wish were more generally read ; but as the History of the Diseases, which ought to be always premised, is often very inaccurate or wanting, these Gentlemen might easily, by thus employing themselves, enrich their Art, and gain solid Applause.

I have now pointed out many Defects and Inconveniences, which Physic labours under ; and some few Things have been proposed towards its better Regulation : But I can easily foresee, that they are no ways adequate to answer the Expectations of the World, without further Aid. I know it will be alledged, that Physic is too expensive, most People being frightned at its Price ; that it is enough for a sick Man to have his Means dissipated by Absence from his Business, without calling in the Doctor to advance his Ruin ; that it is even better to trust in the Apothecary and die, than be recovered by a Physician to the wretched State of Poverty. Such

Complaints

Complaints happen daily, and are industriously propagated ; wherefore it is high Time, methinks, for the Faculty to give them a Hearing, and devise some Methods to stop them. The healing Art has long ranked among the liberal ones ; let it not then be removed to a lower Class, by the fordid avaricious Conduct of its Professors.

Every generous good Man desires Opportunities to relieve the Distresses of his Fellow-Creatures, and make them happy ; but shall it be said to the Disgrace of Physic, where the *Physician* is put on, Humanity and every social Tie are set adrift ? To remove such Sarcasms, have the Business of Physicians done by themselves and thereby recover the Dignity and Usefulness of Physic, I humbly propose (nor can I see any better Way of obtaining all these valuable Purposes) to lessen the present Fees. The Faculty ought, by no Means, to take Umbrage at this Scheme, as if it is ever executed, they will find the Profits of their Business much increased thereby ; for where  
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one Patient, upon the present Footing, sends for a Doctor, you'll find a Dozen ; and at the Beginning of the Disease too, which is a Circumstance well deserving the Notice of Physicians. Whoever shall attempt to make an Estimate of the Money, got by Physic in this Kingdom, I'm very confident, will find it greatly inferior to what any Trade would have given with the same Stock employed in it. It is indeed impossible to make an exact Estimate of this Nature, yet I have good Reason for what is now advanced, as it corresponds with my Information from many Physicians in different Parts of the Country. Very few of them amass Wealth, whereas a great Number never get back their Expences. But whom have the Faculty to blame for this ? Themselves only ; which were of little Consequence, if Society suffered not along with them.

It is manifest from what has been said, that the Public would be great Gainers by this Scheme, in Regard to their Health ; and I may add their Expences too.



too. For applying early to the Art, for the real Aid which it can furnish, Diseases would not run out so long; nor be attended with that Danger, which now proceeds from trifling or unskilful Methods. Thus fewer Medicines would serve all Purposes, and as was proposed before, of a more simple Kind. Great Heaps of Drugs being, at best, loathsome to a Patient, shou'd be avoided; especially as they give a Handle of reproaching the Faculty with courting the Recommendation of Apothecaries, at the Expence of their Patients.

Another Method has been proposed by some People of very good Understanding, for the Physicians to administer their own Drugs, and charge nothing for them. They imagine it to be the most solid Foundation of the Credit and Usefulness of the Art. For my own Part, I have little to object against their Proposal, though I own myself much fonder of the forementioned Scheme. In this Case a Physician, being under no undue Influence, would be prompted by

by his Interest to prescribe only such Things as he judged necessary. However, the other Scheme seems more eligible, as it is more easily executed, and hinders the Apothecaries from complaining of the Bread being taken out of their Mouths.

Here a very good Opportunity offers of inforcing my Proposal, by exhibiting a Draught of the State of Physic in other Countries, which so far as I am acquainted, agrees very well with the Plan I have laid down; but as I am afraid of wearying my Reader, I will only consider the Conduct of the *Dutch* in this Affair, who may be well esteemed Proficients in whatever relates to Oeconomics. The State thought it well deserving their Concern, in what Manner Physic was practised; and very little Attention will discover the Havock in a Society where this Art is practised by ignorant Men. Wherefore they have judged it proper to confine the Apothecaries in their Shops, to prepare Medicines, which is their true Function.

They

They could see no necessary Connexion between the pounding of Drugs in a Mortar, and the Knowledge of their Uses. They have settled the Fees of Physicians, which are very low; much lower than this Country requires, whereby the Poor have the same Care taken of them, with the most wealthy; yet notwithstanding the Meanness of the Fees, such is their Number, that you will find very few Physicians in all the Provinces, who cannot support themselves genteely by their Business. In *Holland* it is unusual for a Physician to be fee'd during his Attendance; wherefore he keeps an Account of his Visits, and sends in his Bill of their Number at a proper Time. The Poor pay him what the Law stipulates, while the Rich make him Presents, according to his Diligence and their Generosity.

I'm not aware of any real Objection, which can be offered to the Scheme now proposed, which, methinks, is well calculated to serve the Interest of Physic and Physicians; and what is much more,

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to serve the Interest of Mankind. Some Gentlemen indeed, who may think it very prejudicial to them, will undoubtedly busy themselves, not perhaps to decry it, but by Raillery and Wit to make it seem ridiculous, and thereby expose those who attempt to put it in Execution. However these Gentlemen, in my Opinion, have very little to fear, though the Practice should become as universal as I wish it. The Gentlemen I mean, are those who have now great Business and great Fees. I say they have little to fear, as their superior Reputation, which, no Doubt, they can always maintain, will secure to them the Business of those People who are able and well disposed to see their Doctors.

It has been shewn already, how much the Practice of Physicians in general would be extended by this Scheme. But this perhaps, with some of an indolent Disposition, may be construed as a material Objection. They may grudge the Labour, which they think so poorly requited.

quited. What! does this great *Stickler* for the Dignity and Honour of Physic, think Doctors are to become Porters? His Design is malicious. The great Zeal he has shewn for Physic, was only feigned to wound it deeper. By degrading the Professors of it thus, he seeks to lessen its Esteem with the World, But we need not regard the Fears or Judgment of such lazy Men. And pray, why should not the Labour of Physicians be increased, if the Revenue of Physic be increased at the same Time?

I will not enlarge, after what has been said already, on the Necessity of Physicians making more frequent Visits, to inform themselves more thoroughly of the Nature and Progress of Diseases. But to destroy that Bugbear of Toil, which some might apprehend from the lessened Fees, and increased Number of Visits, I think it very proper to observe, that the Practice of Physicians by our Scheme, would not lie so wide; but like the Office of our spiritual Physicians be, in a great Measure, parochial.

Before



Before I finish this Pamphlet, I must acquaint my Reader, who possibly has conceived a Prejudice against me, from the Freedom of Censure, which I have indulged ; that whatever good Opinion I entertain of myself, and the Methods already proposed for putting Physic on a better Footing, I am very far from thinking that others more effectual cannot be devised. Perhaps every Thing of this Kind will miscarry, unless the *Legislature* be engaged in it. However, I shall esteem any Trouble I have taken very well recompensed, if thereby Men of Influence and more Knowledge are excited to bestow a little serious Attention on the State of Physic in this Country. We experience daily the Care and Goodness of our *Legislature*, in doing every Thing conducive to the public Interest. Wherefore there seems only wanting a fair Remonstrance of the State of Physic, to engage them in its Interest, on which the Ease, Happiness, and Lives of Mankind greatly depend. It is in their Power to debar ignorant, crafty Men from exercising this Art, and restrict the Practice

to



to Men of Knowledge, Skill, and Integrity. Nor can this be deemed an Attack upon our Civil Liberties, any more than a Restraint upon Licentiousness (which would destroy all Liberty whatsoever) can be deemed such. The best Evidence of a good Constitution of Government and Execution of the Laws, is the great Power, which the Subjects of that Government have to do good, together with an Incapacity of doing Mischief. As People hate to be imposed on, or suffer from the Ignorance and Craft of others, methinks, they should even endeavour to put it beyond the Reach of others, to deceive them. Whoever reflects on the Length of Diseases, and will cast an Eye over the Bills of Mortality in *London* only, will easily allow many, whose Names are in these Lists, to have been Victims to mere Ignorance. But how many more might be rescued from the Grave, if Physic were farther improved? The *Small-Pox*, that fatal nauseous Distemper, finely illustrates what is now advanced. We see it ravage with dreadful Fury, at particular Times, sparing no Age, Sex, or

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Condition ; whereas the Disease communicated by *Inoculation*, is very gentle, and when due Care is taken, of trifling Hazard. The most unfavourable Accounts of this great Improvement demonstrate, that nine Tenths of those who die of the natural Small-pox, would have escaped, had they been inoculated. It certainly deserves a very public Encouragement, as so many Lives can be preserved by it. This would lead me to consider, how far a public Encouragement may be useful or necessary, to carry on a general Improvement in Physic ; and in what Manner that Encouragement should be applied : But I shall leave these Subjects to others ; and now give my Reader a hearty Farewel, wishing this Pamphlet may promote the good Ends for which it is written.

F I N I S.









